

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled votes: myself for up to 15 minutes, Senator PAUL for up to 15 minutes, Senator MENENDEZ for up to 7 minutes, and Senator RISCH for up to 5.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MARIA L. PAGAN

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Senate will soon vote on the nomination of Maria Pagan to serve as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative and our envoy to the World Trade Organization in Geneva.

This vote has been a long time coming; and in a moment, I am going to talk about Ms. Pagan's extensive qualifications and her long experience. But, first, Madam President and colleagues, there is a new urgency today for the Senate to confirm Ms. Pagan with strong bipartisan support.

The Russians' inhuman behavior means that they have forfeited the right to enjoy the fruits of the post-World War II international order.

The World Trade Organization is one of the key venues where the United States and our economic allies must hold Russia accountable for its illegal and unjustifiable war in Ukraine. It means the United States and our economic allies basically have to go to the World Trade Organization and tell Russia: Go fly a kite.

Now, here in the Congress, as the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I am working with the ranking member, Senator MIKE CRAPO; House Ways and Means Chairman RICHIE NEAL; and Ranking Member KEVIN BRADY on legislation that would revoke Russia's permanent normal trade status with the United States. This is part of suspending Russia's benefits at the World Trade Organization and would mean Russia's exports to the United States would immediately be hit with significant tariffs.

Our country has led the effort to ratchet up sanctions against Russia to levels nobody has seen.

Russia's economy is in free fall, and there is no question that hitting Putin's tight circle of oligarchs who dominate Russia's largest industries will pay off. Taking away Russia's trade benefits is an essential next step that will help to freeze Russia out of key markets around the world.

As our Envoy to the World Trade Organization, Ms. Pagan would be our point person coordinating this effort. She will be the one coordinating with like-minded countries and intervening in support of Ukraine. That is why it is so important that she be confirmed today and why it is so important that she have strong backing from both sides of the aisle.

Now, her nomination won bipartisan support in the Senate Finance Committee. The Finance Committee approved her nomination by a vote of 27 to 1, so we are talking about near-unanimous support—certainly some-

thing of a rare sight in the Congress these days. She got that support because she is a highly experienced public servant who knows how to get the best possible deal for our workers and our farmers and our businesses.

Over three decades in government, she has served at both the Department of Commerce and at the Office of the USTR. She is an expert in a variety of fields. From trade in services to government procurement, she has litigated several disputes before the World Trade Organization. She now serves as deputy general counsel at the office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the person called in when issues are particularly challenging. She was recently at the center of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada negotiations, and she was key to helping Democrats guarantee that the final deal would be enforceable. That was a must-have for all Americans; otherwise, the agreement wasn't going to pass.

Working through the WTO to isolate Russia is just going to be one part of her job. There are critical negotiations at WTO that absolutely have to move forward. These include COVID vaccines and the unfair fisheries subsidies that do so much damage to our environment and our fishing industry.

The WTO itself has big issues that have to be addressed. Its rules are out of date, and its procedures move too slowly to keep up with a modern economy.

The Chinese Government, for example, takes advantage of the World Trade Organization's current shortcomings to game the trade system, and they do it at the expense of American jobs, growth, and innovation. A system that is intended to produce ironclad, predictable rules is now opening up loopholes that trade rip-off artists are exploiting.

Ms. Pagan understands these challenges that I described. She is equipped to confront these issues. She is a proven negotiator and a strong advocate for American workers and farmers and businesses.

She has secured significant support from Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee.

There is urgent work that awaits her in Geneva. I urge my colleagues to support this nomination. It is priority business for today, given our trade challenges with Russia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Kentucky.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J.

Res. 35

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 35, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sales to the Government of Egypt of certain defense articles and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, according to tradition, King Menes united the two lands of Europe about 5,000 years ago. Although Egypt appears today as a single state on the globe, American foreign policy still treats the country as if it were two completely different lands—one a critical ally of American aid and one a tyrannical nightmare unworthy of American security assistance.

A State Department human rights report details how General Abdelfattah Elsisi converted a country into a prison. Among other horrors, Egyptian security forces engage in extrajudicial killings, torture, as well as harsh crackdowns on anyone who wishes to practice the right of freedom of speech.

As a result of Egypt's abysmal human rights record, the Biden administration recently blocked \$130 million in annual security assistance. At first glance, that might sound like a rebuke to Egypt. Before applauding this supposedly principled act in solidarity with the long-suffering Egyptian people, keep in mind that in the same week, the State Department—the Biden State Department—approved a military sale of Super Hercules aircraft, which are used to airdrop troops and military equipment, to the Elsisi regime for \$2.2 billion. On the one hand, they blocked \$130 million; on the other hand, they approved \$2.2 billion.

In what may be only described by definition as a slap on the wrist, the \$130 million the State Department blocked is only one-tenth of the annual \$1.3 billion the United States has given to Egypt every year since 1987. In fact, Egypt is one of the largest recipients of U.S. military aid.

If the State Department strictly adhered to Federal Leahy laws, it would insist that Egypt abandon its despotic ways before Egypt received any more security assistance. This law was named after our colleague Senator PATRICK LEAHY. These laws compel the United States to withhold security assistance to countries that have committed gross violations of human rights.

The Biden administration should strictly enforce the Leahy laws and deny Egypt the American dollars it craves until it becomes a place where human rights are honored and respected. Instead, as punishment for their crimes, the ruling class of Egypt will somehow, some way, have to make due with only 90 percent of what they annually expect in largesse from the American taxpayer. Adjusting for inflation, the decades-long transfer of wealth from America to Egypt amounts to over \$41 billion. Of the \$41 billion, some estimate that the previous President, Hosni Mubarak, and his family stole nearly half. The aid not stolen is used by Egypt to buy American weaponry.

Since 2009, the United States has sold Egypt \$3.2 billion in fighter aircraft,

\$1.3 billion in tanks and armored vehicles, \$750 million in missiles, \$36 million in ammunition, and \$328 million in military technology, as well as \$240 million in naval craft. As the United States prepares for yet another military sale, perhaps we should review how one of our most reliable customers treats their own people.

Human Rights Watch reports that “Egypt’s security apparatus has arbitrarily arrested and prosecuted tens of thousands of persons” and that “torture crimes against detainees in Egypt are systematic, widespread, and likely constitute crimes against humanity.”

One such victim of torture is known as Hamza. He was arrested at his home late one night for the crime of participating in a public demonstration. Despite tireless attempts to track him down, his family was unable to locate him for months. Later, it was revealed that the officers who captured him—the officers of the government of Elsisi—used electric shocks on his genitals, his head, and his tongue. But even that was not enough for Elsisi’s henchmen, who later suspended Hamza from his arms until his arms were dislocated at the shoulder.

As a physician, I have treated patients who have dislocated shoulders. It is a very painful injury. Imagine being hauled up by your own government, suspended by your arms until your shoulders are dislocated, and then when they finally cut him down, they left him on the floor without medical treatment for 3 winter days without any blankets.

Such torture would be virtually unbearable for any man. Hamza was not even yet a man; he was a 14-year-old boy at the time of his torture and arrest.

Hamza is not alone. The stories of other victims appear in Human Rights Watch’s 43-page report detailing Egypt’s systemic torture of children, including a victim as young as 12 years old.

In Egypt, journalism—journalism—is a dangerous profession. The Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Egypt the third worst jailer of journalists in the world behind only China and Myanmar.

Take just a few examples. When a 26-year-old man died in police custody, a prominent Egyptian journalist, Islam el-Kahly, was arrested for covering and reporting on the detainee’s death. He is only one of many well-known journalists to be imprisoned for the crime of keeping his people informed.

Photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid was arrested in 2013 for covering the violent break up of a sit-in protest—a peaceful sit-in protest—in Cairo. Zeid was released after 5 years in prison, but he is still not free. He is required to report to the police station at 6 p.m. every night, where it is unknown whether the officer on duty will keep him or not, whether he will be imprisoned every night of his life.

Perhaps no activity is more dangerous than running for Egypt’s Presi-

dency. General Elsisi was reelected—if you can call it an election—in 2018 with 97 percent of the vote, whose Soviet-style results were made possible only after opposition candidates were effectively eliminated.

Two candidates, Sami Anan and Ahmed Konsowa, were imprisoned. A third candidate to run against Elsisi, Ahmed Shafik, was placed under house arrest. A senior staffer to one of the candidates, Hisham Geneina, was brutally attacked by three men, resulting in serious damage to his left eye and orbital bones. When another candidate, Mohamed Anwar al-Sadat, withdrew from the race, he said: “It’s like committing suicide to run against someone like this.”

President Biden pledged to put human rights at the “center of our foreign policy.” Torture of children, arbitrary arrests of dissidents and journalists, sham elections, and the violent crushing of peaceful opposition—if these are not gross violations of human rights, nothing is.

The United States cannot proudly proclaim human rights to be the center of our foreign policy while it arms a regime that has a war against its own people. We should end military sales to Egypt’s criminal masters. Partially taking away some military aid while offering new sales that are 10 times what we withheld shows weakness in the face of repression.

Our weapons are an incredibly important part of America’s power, and we should not willy-nilly and without judgment give them to anybody and everybody around the world. They could be used as leverage for improving human rights. Instead, we just give them, and there is this vicious cycle of enriching those who produce the munitions and no concern for human rights.

Mere slaps on the wrists cannot hide the inescapable fact that the United States has handsomely rewarded Egypt as it degenerated into one of the most autocratic places on the globe. America should in no uncertain terms demonstrate we will no longer strengthen a strongman.

My resolution is to cancel military sales. It offers a choice—whether the United States will side with the Egyptian people or with their oppressors.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 35.

I am a little perplexed by the Parliamentarian’s decision that this can move forward because there is a statutory timeframe that says that the resolution needs to be brought forth in order for it to have validity.

My understanding of the Parliamentarian’s decision is that even though—if there was passage of this resolution—it would not have validity because it is past the timeframe, it still can be brought. That seems to be a pursuit of the Senate’s time in a way that is an extraordinary amount of time on

unlimited numbers of discharge resolutions that potentially exist that, having passed the statutory timeframe, can still be brought to the Senate floor even though whatever the vote is has no consequence. I fail to understand that.

Since that is the ruling, let me just say that I appreciate that the Senator from Kentucky has concerns about human rights in Egypt, and I agree that we must absolutely continue to raise concerns in a way that will meaningfully bring about positive change. I believe we should be doing more to prioritize a country’s human rights record in the context of our broader relationship.

In fact, last year, with several of my colleagues, I introduced S. 1473, the Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Exports Act, or what we call the SAFEGUARD Act, to ensure that human rights issues full attention and arms exports decision making are considered.

And I invite all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to support and cosponsor this important legislation.

As I think everyone in this body knows, for years I have led the fight in the Senate against arms sales to countries that commit significant and repeated human rights abuses such as Saudi Arabia.

Last Congress, the Senate approved 23 resolutions of disapproval that I introduced when the Trump administration sought to short circuit our rights to consider these sales according to law.

Joint resolutions of disapproval are just one tool that we have, and we must make sensible distinctions about the types of systems we consider. In this particular debate, as I have argued before, a critical distinction is between arms that are inherently offensive and lethal and those that are not. Some are defensive; some are simply logistical.

Today, we are considering a sale of 12 cargo aircraft, which I believe squarely falls in the category of largely defensive, nonlethal arms. This aircraft is used for transporting military and other cargo, including humanitarian supplies, as well as personnel in-country and internationally. Egypt has earlier model C-130s since the 1980s, but its current fleet is aging and becoming more expensive to maintain.

The United States and Egypt have a long and valuable relationship that goes beyond the security realm. Egypt is also an important security partner for other U.S. allies in the region. This, of course, does not mean that it is above reproach—it is not—or that the nature of that relationship is static. It is not.

Indeed, I supported the Secretary of State’s determination made last month not to release \$130 million in withheld foreign military financing because Egypt’s government has not made, in his view, sufficient progress in human rights, especially with regard to the

treatment of peaceful activists and the continued targeting of independent civil society organizations.

I have used my prerogative as chair of the Foreign Relations Committee in the arms sales process before, and I will continue to do so in the future regarding systems that may consistently relate to these concerns.

But in the end, our relationship with Egypt has to be one of maintaining a balance between the foreign policy and national security concerns of the United States and our partners.

We should, however, continue to raise human rights concerns and press for meaningful reforms. We should continue encouraging the government to uphold its own commitments, but to this end, because these are purely, not only—they are logistical at best, I urge my colleagues to reject this motion to discharge.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, tonight we are going to consider S.J. Res. 35 and 36, and they are the resolutions of disapproval regarding arms sales to Egypt. Egypt has been a key partner of the United States since the 1979 Camp David Accords.

It continues to play a critical role in Middle East peace. Egypt is a valuable counterterrorism partner and is essential to U.S. accession in the region and the U.S. success in the region. Look, for those who haven't had the good fortune of being there, when the peace broke out between Israel and Egypt decades ago, Egypt played a key role in making that peace. And ever since then, the border between Egypt and Israel on the Sinai has been peaceful, notwithstanding the fact that they have incidents there all the time.

But the Egyptians and the Israelis, brokered by the multilateral force that is there, keeps the peace, and it has been a great success story in the Middle East, one of the few that has had duration. And so in that regard, Egypt has been very valuable in helping keep the peace in the region.

The Biden administration and Democratic Senate and House leaders agreed on these sales because they are in the interest of the United States and, indeed, of the world and particularly of the Middle East. These sales of cargo aircraft and radar support the United States-Egypt relationship and are in keeping with Egypt's legitimate defense requirements.

Human rights are a critical element of our foreign relations. They always have been, and they always will be. And Egypt has problems it needs to fix.

The United States has withheld aid and taken other measures to highlight our concerns to the Egyptian Government. Indeed, Egypt is not a perfect partner, and we have almost no perfect partners when we are dealing with foreign countries on national security.

Nonetheless, each of these is transactional, and they have to be weighed

and viewed individually. These sales that we are talking about here to Egypt present no direct human rights concerns and should be separated from that conversation.

So, on substance, I oppose the resolution.

In addition to that, there is a bigger issue here. The statutory 30-day congressional notification period for these sales expired last Wednesday, March 2. The Parliamentarian has now ruled that the statutory 30-day period is effectively irrelevant and that any Senator can offer for privileged consideration a resolution of disapproval for any arms sales notified over the course of an entire Congress.

If this stands and continues, it would have a chilling effect on U.S. alliances and partnerships worldwide, and it could set a new procedure as far as dilatory tactics are concerned on the Senate floor.

The 1987 precedent that the Parliamentarian cites as justification is from a time when there was a bipartisan agreement to extend the timeline for simple procedural reasons. This is not the case now. And I disagree with the Parliamentarian's interpretation thereof.

It always amazes me around here that we can get a Parliamentarian ruling that is in direct—I mean direct contradiction of a statute, which is what we have here.

I ask—and I would urge—Senate leadership to work to ensure the intent of the statutory 30-day notification period is restored. Perhaps we should repass the statute and say we really, really mean it. Nonetheless, that is where we are, and this really needs to be corrected.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 19, nays 80, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 73 Leg.]

YEAS—19

Blumenthal
Brown
Carper
Heinrich
Hirono
Leahy
Lee

Lujan
Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Ossoff
Padilla
Paul

Peters
Sanders
Smith
Stabenow
Warren

NAYS—80

Baldwin
Barrasso
Bennet
Blackburn
Blunt
Booker

Boozman
Braun
Burr
Cantwell
Capito
Cardin

Casey
Cassidy
Collins
Coons
Cornyn
Cortez Masto

Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Duckworth
Durbin
Ernst
Feinstein
Fischer
Gillibrand
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hassan
Hawley
Hickenlooper
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Kaine

Kelly
Kennedy
King
Klobuchar
Lankford
Lummis
Manchin
Marshall
McConnell
Menendez
Moran
Murkowski
Murray
Portman
Reed
Risch
Romney
Rosen
Rounds
Rubio
Sasse

Schatz
Schumer
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shaheen
Shelby
Sinema
Sullivan
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden
Young

NOT VOTING—1

Inhofe

The motion was rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Maria L. Pagan, of Puerto Rico, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Geneva Office), with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pagan nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The result was announced—yeas 80, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 74 Ex.]

YEAS—80

Baldwin
Barrasso
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt
Booker
Brown
Burr
Cantwell
Capito
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Cassidy
Collins
Coons
Cornyn
Cortez Masto
Cramer
Crapo
Daines
Duckworth
Durbin
Ernst
Feinstein
Fischer
Gillibrand

Graham
Grassley
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Hoeven
Kaine
Kelly
Kennedy
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Lujan
Manchin
Markley
McConnell
Menendez
Merkley
Moran
Murkowski
Murphy
Murray
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Portman

Reed
Risch
Romney
Rosen
Rounds
Rubio
Sanders
Sasse
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Sinema
Smith
Stabenow
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Whitehouse
Wicker
Wyden
Young